

21
38. A method of rinsing fabric in a washer according to claim
15
30 wherein fabric softener is mixed with said water in the last of
said rinsing steps.

COMMENTS

Upon entry of the above amendments, claims 1, 4 through 6 and 14 through 38 are pending in the present application. None of the claims pending in the application have been allowed or indicated as allowable. By the above amendment, recirculation of rinse water has been included as a limitation on all pending claims. Independent claim 21 has been added replacing independent claim 10. New dependant claims 14 through 29 and 31 through 38 have been added, replacing prior dependant claims 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, and 13.

In the outstanding Office Action, original claims 1 through 13 were rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting over claims of co-pending patent application serial number 07/815,784. Upon the receipt of a notification of allowance in one of these patent applications, Applicant's Attorney will file an appropriate Terminal Disclaimer in the other of these two applications.

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In the outstanding Office Action, claims 1 [amended] and 5, dependant on claim 1, were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being fully anticipated by Hoffman. Since Hoffman does not teach recirculation of rinse water, as was explicitly noted by the Examiner, and since this limitation has now been added to these claims by the above amendment, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Additionally, claims 1 [AMENDED] and 4 through 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being obvious over the Hoffman in view of Brenner and Syles. Applicant's Attorney respectfully requests reconsideration of this rejection in view of the amendments presented above and the arguments presented below.

Hoffman teaches a horizontal axis fabric wash system using a low speed tumble wash cycle and a low speed tumble rinse cycle. As noted by the Examiner, Hoffman nowhere teaches or suggests the use of a highly concentrated solution, required by some of the claims now pending, or the recirculation of the rinse water, required by all of the claims now pending.

Brenner, teaches a vertical axis fabric wash system using a high speed spin wash cycle using a highly concentrated detergent followed by a lower speed agitate wash cycle in a more diluted wash liquor. Brenner has no pertinent teachings about a rinse cycle and nowhere teaches or suggests recirculation of rinse water. Brenner nowhere suggests that any of its teachings are applicable to a horizontal axis wash process nor does it provide any teachings that would would make it obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art how to apply any of its teachings to a horizontal wash process.

Syles teaches a horizontal axis wash system recirculating the rinse liquid during the rinsing cycle while tumbling the fabric within the rotating wash basket through a pool of wash liquor. Syles nowhere suggests spraying the water onto the fabric during the rinse cycle, which is required by many of the claims in the present application, nor does Syles suggest using highly concentrated detergent, which is required by each of the other claims.

In contrast, the present invention is directed to a novel method of rinsing clothes in a horizontal axis automatic washer which can be used with any wash cycle but has particular utility following a wash cycle having a highly concentrated detergent solution. The new rinse method provides a suitable combination of rinsing water and mechanical energy to be effective in removing highly concentrated detergent solution from a load of clothes while avoiding redeposition of removed dirt onto the clothes load. In particular, the rinse method of the present invention is intended to minimize the amount of water and mechanical energy used as well as limiting the duration of the rinse cycle.

None of the references cited by the Examiner, either taken alone or in any combination suggest the novel process of the present invention and, in fact, none of the references even suggest a recognition of the problem which the present invention addresses.

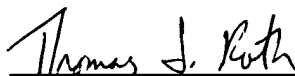
In fact, Applicant's Attorney respectfully submits that these references teach such radically different processes from each other that one, of ordinary skill in the art, would not have found it obvious to combine them in any way, let alone in the manner suggested by the Examiner. One of ordinary skill in the art, having before him or her these references would not know where to begin to combine them, since there is no teaching in any as to the manner in which they should or could be combined.

For the reasons presented above, it is believed that the application, as now presented, is in condition for allowance, and that there are no remaining issues in the application. Allowance of the application as now presented, and passing of the application to issue are respectfully solicited.

If for any reason the Examiner feels that this amendment does not so place the application in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that he promptly contact applicants' undersigned attorney by telephone at the number shown below so that suitable steps may be taken to place the application in such condition.

Further and favorable action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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